Mr. John Crewdson
The New York Times
1920 L St., NW
Washington, D.C.

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Dear John,

Since our last conversation I have been troubled by two more things, neither of which strikes me as normal. Yesterday, after the end of the working day when his office staff could be expected to be gone, it took three of you to interview Bud when I am sure he made it clear that he knows less than the others of us about the King/Ray case; And none of you/the Times found any news in what I had gotten from the FBI, proof that the case alleged against Ray was to its and DJ knowledge false and its own lab work proved it.

Having met neither of your colleagues I do not know if they were there. But the Times received notice, I did offer copies and it seems to have been entirely alone in finding nothing of news value.

Well, in case none of you were, one of the first things I did was show with their own pictures how the FBI was setting CBS up to be its running g dog.

If your collective work brings anything factual and new to light I'll be happy. If you solve the crime it will be so great a personal favor to me that phlebitis or not I'll lead a parade in your honor. I have wished since 1971 that I did not feel obligated to do this work. I have too much other work that means more personally.

What troubles me is not getting beat on a story. Recently I've been giving them away, as this past week, when I could have done a quick magazine piece. I have another FOIA suit filed. There was a time when it looked like the government might opt not going to court. When this became apparent, without seeing the material - and I've not seen it yet - the first thing I did was call a reporter friend and ask him to work out an arrangement when there would be xeroxing facilities for all who want copies and for all to have equal access. I have this all in writing if you for a minute doubt this. I'm getting more than I can use anyway when I'm unwell. But I started this 10 months ago with everything I believe comprehensible enough.

You are all good reporters, but you are all in a strange field. And I think you have not perceived the problems the government has in more acute form now. I do not believe that any of you knows enough about the complicated fact to discriminate, not to run the serious risk of being had. In the past I told you twice when you were - and that I welcomed the appearance of those stories. Franklin should remember that he was had once on an anti-Warren story which vindicated the guilty lawyers. And that afterward I explained this to him and either offered or sent him the proof. (That story is still going the rounds as disinfo2mation.)

It looks bad for three experienced reporters all of whom should be busy to visit a single man who can say very little except what they can misuse while they stay away from those who might break down the case they are building.

Your own attitudes toward this story are clear, but I think not to you. You have twice misquoted my writing of six or more years ago to me. Knowing what I think I asked you to read those passages and pointed out they do not mean what you said. I am sorry you have not learned from these experiences.

On almost any other story, where there is no chance of confidence being breached, good reporters in a strange field seek to check and double-check what they are getting. On this story there are two possibilities only and you have stayed away. The most obvious meaning is that you are so hungry for a sensation on which you do not fear being sued is that you don't check the sensations you gather. (I'll be surprised if without official help and guidance and this has to come from those who are now in trouble.)

Attribute to me what you will, I have always been available for checking, whether or not sick and regardless of the hour. My one complain has been about bullshitting me.

Unlike you (plural) I do not get paid for my time. (With two exceptions: BBC and a scandal sheet, both of which send small payments for the time they take, without being asked.) So when I offer to take time and have taken time with you the one certainty is that there is nothing in it for me.

Nothing reaches you, either. You find a shrink, he checks his records and lo! his professional opinion of Ray is exactly that I gave you, in detail and in Ray's purposes.

So, you have no intention of checking your work out. That is your affair. It sure saves time for me when my activity is limited. I have to spend long periods resting, which is when I package the books for shipping. At any other time any call limits the little other work I can do.

I am troubled by the record of the press in the assassinations story. It is wretched and not all of it can be attributed to dependence on sources and the oppressiveness of deadlines. The net result has been to aggravate and prolong a national agony. I see its effects as you do not. Of what I see daily I deplore most the ripping off of the minds by both extremes.

I am troubled also that next to the government on its side there is no more stinking record than that of the Times. I can't recall any garbage it found unfit to print. Powerful as it is, it will wind up Cabute.

I am troubled, too, by the timing of all of this. It comes just when the government is not only in trouble and not only about to be dragged into court on the very story but when they have been caught redhanded.

Perfection is not a state of man and I do not claim it. But my work has stacked, my understandings have been correct, my analyses have withstood much time and vigorous and continuous assault. I do not claim to be error-proof. But I do claim to know more about the work I do than anyone else, including your federal sources. I do not claim that they do not know what I don't but I think I have a pretty good idea of what some of it is and I've told you what I think some of it has to be and its origin. I do not file suits I can't afford on guesses and have a clear record of failing in none and of never getting less than I expected or finding that what I got was other than I expected.

You resent advice and you're off and running. I do hope you don't end on your face, in the mud.

I hope also that you'll start asking yourself questions that from our conversations you have not. Like qui bono? Does someone have an interest in using you(plural) and does the situation lend itself to this? Can there be knowledge you do not have that can prove what seems reasonable to be wrong?

In time we will know the outcome. Until then, aside from advice you do not welcome, I am making a record that you have refused to check your own work out with the one who is in a position to show you error and who is and has been available.

Should you decide to, I will be away Monday only of next week.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg